

HOW TO FEND OFF AN UNWANTED KISS

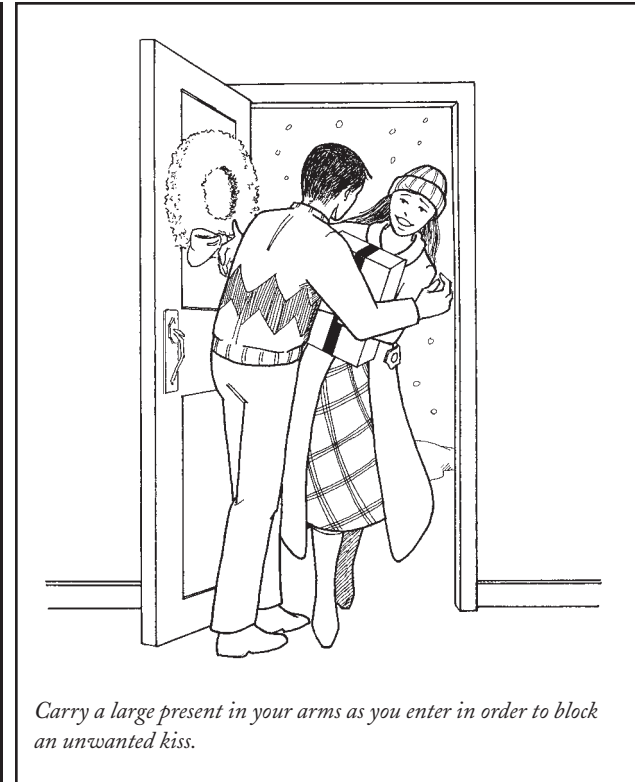
ON ARRIVAL

- 1** Carry a present, coat, hat, or child in front of you as you enter.
- 2** Extend your free arm in a wide arc and move into a hug position.
- 3** If the greeter leans in to plant a kiss, use the head-and-shoulders maneuver.

Move your head toward the kisser, then at the last moment, rotate your shoulders, throw your arm around, and bury your head in the kisser's neck.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE

- 1** Find the mistletoe.
As soon as you arrive, determine the location of the mistletoe. Check the lintel over doorways and hanging lights, which often obscure the mistletoe.
- 2** Establish alternate routes.
Avoiding the mistletoe is the best defense. Plan your comings and goings so that you do not pass under the mistletoe.



Carry a large present in your arms as you enter in order to block an unwanted kiss.

- 3** Employ evasive maneuvers.
If the mistletoe is hung in an inescapable location and someone is approaching, be prepared to use counter-measures:
 - Keep walking, as if you didn't realize you were under the mistletoe.
 - Carry a drink or plate of food at all times, and quickly take a sip or bite as the person approaches.

- Sneeze, cough, or scratch your nose just as the person moves in. When they hesitate, turn the attempted kiss into a friendly hug.
- Move rapidly and place a preemptive, glancing kiss on the person's forehead or cheek, thereby avoiding a more serious kiss.

4 **Make up a mistletoe-related fib.**

When fleeing from the would-be kisser seems too rude and other defensive tactics won't work, create a new mistletoe custom that would preclude the kiss:

- “This mistletoe has no berries! That's bad luck!”
- “That's not real mistletoe, it's plastic! How tacky—we can't kiss under that!”
- “Can you believe they put up mistletoe? Who believes in that anymore?”

Be Aware

- Portable mistletoe—a sprig attached to the end of a curved stick—is not valid mistletoe and does not invoke the kiss tradition. (You might also question why you are attending a party with someone who would attempt the “mistletoe-on-a-stick” trick.)
- Do not attempt to avoid a mistletoe kiss by claiming that you are not Christian. The custom of kissing under mistletoe is not specific to Christianity and is observed in many religions and countries.

**WORST-CASE
SCENARIO.**